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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)
SUBJECT: A SUMMARY OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

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¶1. (SBU) Political violence has increased over the past several months and many fear this trend will only worsen before the April elections. The driving force is a desire to capture power and control of state resources at all costs. Nigeria's rampant corruption and patronage-based system support a winner-take-all attitude with no room for opposition or defeat. Increased oil revenues have only served to raise the stakes and the lesson of 2003 that the road to victory is through violence and rigging has been learned well by all parties. Violence occurs at federal, state and local levels, as well as within political parties. Incumbents use state resources such as the police or arm groups of thugs to disrupt opposition campaign activities while opposition groups deploy their own arsenals to confront the ruling party by any means necessary. Most cases of electoral violence are never fully investigated or prosecuted.

¶2. (SBU) COMMENT. There is little discussion of what happens to these armed groups when the elections are over and they are no longer needed by their political godfathers. Nowhere has this played out more clearly than in the fragile Niger Delta region, where militias armed to carry out political violence in the lead up to the 2003 elections have moved on to economic violence and sabotage aimed at critical oil and gas infrastructure and more recently to kidnapping of foreign oil workers. END COMMENT.

RECENT POLITICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

¶3. (SBU) Statistics on political violence are difficult at best. Even NGO groups within Nigeria cannot agree on what constitutes political violence and, hence, how many such incidents have occurred recently. The NGO Nigerian Alliance for Peaceful Elections (NAPE) maintains it has recorded 77 cases (51 confirmed) of kidnapping, killings and clashes of supporters in Bayelsa, Bauchi, Benue, Rivers and Delta States. The South Africa-based Institute for Democracy recently claimed at a workshop in Abuja that as many as 280 people have been killed in Nigeria over the last 2 months. Below is a list of recent incidents compiled by Post, dating back to December 2006. Not all incidents have been confirmed. Most, but not all, were reported in the press.

March 23, 2007

A group of youths threw stones at PDP presidential candidate Umaru Yar'Adua's campaign team motorcade at an intersection in Zaria, shouting "We don't want you." Yar'Adua was forced to cancel his courtesy call on the Emir of Zaria and instead proceeded directly to his next campaign stop in Kano. Several vehicles were damaged. No injuries were reported.

March 21, 2007

Ekiyor Welson, Chief Press Secretary to Bayelsa State Governor and PDP Vice Presidential candidate Goodluck Jonathan, allegedly ordered security agents to shoot news correspondent George Oraeki for writing a story on how State funds were diverted to the Yar'Adua/Goodluck campaign. The security agents refused and Oraeki was released unharmed.

March 20, 2007

DPP supporters in Gombe stormed a Magistrate Court with knives, machetes and guns, forcibly freeing DPP gubernatorial candidate Abubakar Habu Hashidu and wounding the presiding judge. Hashidu was arrested on March 18 (see below).

March 19, 2007

An AC leader in Edo State was seriously beaten and three others injured by suspected PDP thugs for organizing a rally in support of LP gubernatorial candidate Adams Oshiomhole.

March 18, 2007

A clash between PDP and AC supporters left ten dead and 30

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homes burned in Benue State.

Police arrested Gombe State DPP gubernatorial candidate and former state governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu and 14 supporters for allegedly inciting a riot in Gombe. Hashidu and his supporters maintain they were defending themselves against an attack by a group calling itself Yan Kalare (NOTE: Yan Kalare is widely believed to be a PDP-supported group).

The convoy of former minister and Labor Party candidate Olusegun Mimiko was ambushed in Ondo state. There were no injuries, but several cars were damaged. Mimiko and his supporters blame PDP Governor Segun Agagu.

March 17, 2007

The motorcade carrying Hajiya Maimuna Aliero, wife of PDP Governor Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State, was attacked by thugs while campaigning in the Zuru local government area of the state. No injuries were reported.

March 15, 2007

ANPP Senatorial candidate Haijiya Halima Alfa was attacked near Ankpa, Kogi State by a group of thugs. Two ANPP supporters were reportedly killed and four others injured.

March 11, 2007

Gunmen attacked an AC rally in Lagos State. Two people were reportedly killed. (NOTE: This report remains unconfirmed.)

March 10, 2007

Groups affiliated with the PDP and DPP went on a 48-hour vandalism spree in Sokoto, razing party offices and destroying vehicles belonging to both parties. Several injuries were reported. Police responded by banning all

political rallies in the state.

At least 4 people died and others were critically injured when fighting broke out between PDP and ANPP supporters Abeokuta, Ogun State (the home town of President Obasanjo). The clash allegedly started when PDP supporters stopped the movement of ANPP vehicles. Several vehicles belonging to ANPP supporters were destroyed. Later, ANPP gubernatorial flag bearer Senator Ibikunle Amosun was arrested and detained for inciting the violence.

At least two people died and an unknown number were injured when thugs carrying PDP placards attacked supporters of ANPP candidate Buhari in Enugu. According to one eyewitness, at least ten cars were destroyed and the thugs, with police standing watch, continued firing weapons into the house of a Buhari organizer where members of the group had taken refuge for over an hour.

March 6, 2007

Taofiki Onigboho was assassinated by suspected thugs at his residence in Ibadan. Onigboho is related to Sunday Igboho, a suspected thug of Governor Rasheed Ladoja who is wanted by police in connection with the February 3 Akure violence (see below).

March 5, 2007

A report from Gombe maintained there was a clash between PDP and ANPP supporters. Another version claimed armed policemen attached to ANPP governorship candidate Jamilu Isiaku Gwamma allegedly opened fire on PDP supporters at Tumu, injuring Governor Danjuma Goje,s personal assistant.

March 4, 2007

Ten people were reportedly killed in several days of clashes between rival gangs in Port Harcourt. The clashes are believed to be evidence of the groups jockeying for position ahead of the elections.

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February 12, 2007

At least 35 people were killed during seven days of clashes in the Ogoni region of Rivers state where two of Governor Peter Odili's associates were fighting over political control of the area.

February 5, 2007

Gunmen attacked Vice President Atiku,s political associate and chairman of the AC Steering Committee, Dr. Yakubu Abdallah, in the United Kingdom. Abdallah,s security guard and driver were killed.

February 4, 2007

Skirmishes occurred in Ogbomosho, Oyo State spreading to other parts of the town. Fighting began when a Nigerian Union of Road and Transport Workers leader loyal to former governor Alao-Akala attacked supporters of Governor Ladoja.

February 3, 2007

Fighting broke out at a PDP rally in Akure, Oyo State between supporters of Governor Ladoja and his former deputy, Alao-Akala. The rally, which was attended by President Obasanjo, confirmed Alao-Akala as the PDP gubernatorial candidate. Two people were reportedly killed and several others injured.

An ANPP party agent was killed in Iree, Osun State by suspected PDP thugs who allegedly removed ballot boxes and

voters' lists during a bye-election for House of Representatives in Ward 9. In Ward 10, two female INEC employees were stripped naked and beaten to a coma.

The federal government deployed soldiers to Akure, Ondo State to quell a major fracas between supporters of PDP and Labor Party (LP). Two people were reportedly killed.

February 2, 2007

PDP and PPA supporters attacked each other in Aba, Abia State. Several injuries were reported and vehicles and property destroyed.

PDP chieftain Lawson Onokpasa of Delta State was murdered at his residence by unknown gunmen.

February 1, 2007

Inspector General of Police Sunday Ehindero told the press that the Nigeria Police impounded 7 trailer-loads of arms and ammunition in Lagos suspected to have been smuggled into Nigeria by desperate politicians.⁸

January 18, 2007

Two PDP supporters died following an intra-party clash in Asaba, Delta State. The fighting occurred during a reconciliatory meeting of PDP stakeholders.

January 6, 2007

Suspected arson caused significant damage in the corporate headquarters of Thisday, a leading Nigerian newspaper.

December 27, 2006

Mr. Godwin Agbroko, editor and columnist of Thisday was gunned down in Lagos by unknown assassins on his way back from work. Agbroko's column was frequently critical of the administration.

December 21, 2006

Umar Pariya, an aide to Vice President Atiku, was attacked at his residence by suspected hired assassins. His guard and domestic servant were injured; Pariya escaped injury.

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December 11, 2006

Vice-Chair of Odiolowo/Ojuwoye Local Government of Lagos State escaped an assassination attempt. The attempt followed a threat that he would be killed if he picked up the AC nomination for Lagos State House of Assembly.

December 1, 2007

A Council Chairman of Gboko Local Government Area and aspirant for the state House of Assembly of Benue State was murdered by unknown gunmen.

CAMPBELL